



U.S. Department of Justice

Ronald C. Machen Jr.
*United States Attorney for the
District of Columbia*

*Judiciary Center
555 Fourth St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530*

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, June 21, 2011

For Information Contact:

Public Affairs

(202) 252-6933

<http://www.justice.gov/usao/dc/news/2011/jun/news.html>

Virginia Man Sentenced for Defrauding the Government To Collect Pension of His Deceased Father - More Than \$335,000 Collected Through the Scheme -

WASHINGTON - Ralph Sincavage, 65, of Arlington, Va., was sentenced today to 18 months in prison for defrauding the United States government in order to collect the pension of his deceased father, announced U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr., Patrick E. McFarland, Inspector General of the Office of Personnel Management, and David E. Beach, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Secret Service's Washington Field Office.

The Honorable Emmet G. Sullivan of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia imposed the sentence, which includes two years of supervised release. The judge also ordered Sincavage to pay full restitution and forfeit all proceeds to the government. Sincavage previously entered a guilty plea to one count of theft of government money and admitted to stealing more than \$335,000 over the course of 17 years.

According to evidence proffered at the plea hearing in September 2010, Sincavage's father received retirement annuity payments from the Civil Service Retirement System based on his prior service as a government truck driver. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM), an agency of the federal government, manages the Civil Service Retirement System.

Civil Service Retirement System benefits are afforded to federal employees known as annuitants upon retirement from federal service. An annuitant receives these benefits throughout his lifetime based on his age, average salary, and length of federal service. Upon an annuitant's death, the benefits do not accrue to surviving children over 22 years of age. A survivor annuity is payable only to some spouses and some children under 22, and only upon OPM's approval of an application from the eligible surviving family member.

After his father's death in 1992, Sincavage did not notify OPM of the death. Instead, Sincavage took steps to defraud OPM in order to collect his father's annuity – an annuity to which Sincavage was not entitled. Before his death, Sincavage's father also received health-care

benefits through OPM. On or about November 17, 1992, Sincavage cancelled his father's health-care benefits by forging his father's name on a Health Benefits Cancellation Confirmation form and mailing the form to OPM's address in the District of Columbia. Sincavage took this action in order to increase the dollar amount of the annuity; previously each annuity payment had been reduced by the cost of his father's health-care benefits.

On or about January 1, 1993, OPM discovered the death of Sincavage's father by examining records of the Social Security Administration. On January 14, 1993, OPM flagged the father in OPM's database as being deceased, and OPM halted the annuity payments. On January 28, 1993, the defendant contacted OPM and pretended to be his father. As a result of this phone call, OPM restored the annuity payments.

On occasion, OPM mailed Address Verification Letters to annuitants in order to verify that an annuitant was still alive and that OPM had the annuitant's correct address on file. In three instances – in 1993, 1995, and 2005 – Sincavage forged his father's signature on an Address Verification Letter and falsely asserted that his father was still alive, then mailed the documents to OPM's address in the District of Columbia. Based on these certifications, OPM continued to pay the annuity, which Sincavage collected.

In or about October 2009, OPM again received information from the Social Security Administration that Sincavage's father was dead, and OPM halted the annuity payments. From April 1, 1992, to November 1, 2009, Sincavage collected a total of \$335,882.45 in annuity payments to which he was not entitled.

In announcing today's sentence, U.S. Attorney Machen, Inspector General McFarland, and Special Agent in Charge Beach commended the investigative efforts of Special Agent Christopher Sulhoff of the Office of the Inspector General of the Office of Personnel Management and Special Agent Kevin Rydalch of the U.S. Secret Service. They also praised the work of members of the United States Attorney's Office, including Administrative Staff Assistant Jamasee Lucas, Assistant U.S. Attorney Diane Lucas, who handled the criminal forfeiture aspects of the case, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Bryan Seeley, who prosecuted the case.